

VZCZCXRO8831
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHTV #3083/01 2980830
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 250830Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3829
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 003083

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/24/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [ECON](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: COGAT COMMENTS ON GAZA AND WEST BANK

Classified By: DCM Luis G. Moreno, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. DCM and PolCouns called on the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, Major General Mishlev, October 23 as part of the Embassy's efforts to improve the atmosphere in advance of the international meeting. Mishlev agreed that COGAT staff would work with the Embassy to resolve problems and address specific humanitarian issues. He also provided an overview of the situation in Gaza, noting that Hamas was clashing with Palestinian Islamic Jihad as well as with prominent clans. He said the IDF has proposed limiting electricity to Gaza in response to ongoing rocket attacks, but stressed that this would be done carefully in order to limit the impact on the civilian population. Mishlev said Israel must control the crossing of people from Gaza because "everyone" now wants to leave, but he agreed that COGAT will be responsive to requests from the Embassy to allow the departure of specific individuals. End Summary.

¶2. (C) DCM, accompanied by PolCouns and Assistant Army Attach, called on Major General Yossef Mishlev, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) October 23. DCM and PolCouns stressed the importance of improving the atmosphere and avoiding problems before the international meeting, and asked Mishlev to renew the previously established channel for working with COGAT's officers. Mishlev agreed, but noted that his responsibility was to work with the IDF's civil administration; security issues in the Ministry of Defense were the responsibility of Amos Gilad.

¶3. (C) Mishlev agreed on the need to improve conditions, noting that he had agreed to the transit of a number of Gazan students who were beneficiaries of USG-funded scholarship programs, as well as a community of Palestinian Christians who are being threatened by Islamic extremists. Mishlev said that Hamas is watching carefully to see how the Annapolis conference turns out and is trying to maintain a ceasefire. Hamas members had clashed earlier that day with Islamic Jihad near Rafah, he said, adding that it will be interesting to see what the Egyptians decided to do with the wounded from those clashes. Also, Hamas was attacking some of the clans in Gaza. A clash with the Hillis clan resulted in five dead and fifty wounded. He assessed Fatah as weak but not totally inactive. Commenting that it was "good to keep Hamas busy," Mishlev expressed sympathy for the civilian population of Gaza, which he noted was "caught in the middle."

¶4. (C) Mishlev described some of his efforts to address civilian needs in Gaza. He said he had recently met Palestinian Minister of Agriculture Habash and had helped arrange a meeting between Habash and Israeli Minister of Agriculture Simhon. Mishlev said he had discussed with Habash ways of resuming exports of flowers, potatoes and tomatoes from Gaza. Thirty to forty critically ill and other humanitarian cases were being allowed to cross through Erez crossing daily, but that effort was now jeopardized by

intelligence that terrorists were seeking to exploit this process. Kerem Shalom will become the principal crossing. The GOI planned to close Sufa crossing at the end of October and transfer its operations to Kerem Shalom. Mishlev said he was encouraged by indications that the PA may agree to use Kerem Shalom for the transit of people as well as goods. He estimated that 700 Palestinians wanting to return to Gaza were still stranded in Egypt while he had recommended to Defense Minister Barak that 5,000 be allowed to leave Gaza.

15. (C) Turning to the GOI's September designation of Gaza as a "hostile entity," Mishlev noted that the decision to limit supplies of electricity and fuel to Gaza had not yet been implemented, but the MOD was pressing to do so soon, especially since a rocket had been fired at the power station in Ashkelon that was supplying power to Gaza. Mishlev predicted that Israel would soon impose more restrictions on Gaza, "but will do so carefully" to limit the impact on the civilian population.

16. (C) Regarding the West Bank, Mishlev said they had streamlined procedures for ID cards so that ninety percent of West Bank Palestinians who used to need to apply to the Civil Administration could be handled entirely by the PA. He took credit for ensuring that West Bank crossing points had remained open until midnight during the Muslim feast (Eid Al-Fitr) and that Israeli Arabs were allowed to visit the West Bank during Eid. Seventeen or eighteen West Bank villages have been connected to the Israeli power grid, and there were plans to connect about ten more. Olmert had delivered on his promise to President Abbas to legalize the residency of about 5,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, and planning was moving forward for two industrial parks.

TEL AVIV 00003083 002 OF 002

17. (C) In Gaza, Mishlev said he had authorized the entry of material needed for a World Bank sewage project, and asked that USAID be in touch with him regarding the need for pumping equipment. He reiterated that he had approved the transit to the West Bank of a group of over twenty Gazan Christians, including their families, but noted that the problem was that "everyone" wanted to leave Gaza, so Israel could only allow humanitarian cases and "special" requests by the U.S. Embassy.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

JONES